



The 42: The Journal of Mt Pleasant Main Street

Mount Pleasant Main Street Newsletter

Issue III

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Our Vision

A Mt. Pleasant Street that promotes, reflects and strengthens the neighborhood's unique diversity, rich history, and local art, while providing a safe and clean environment that will allow businesses to prosper, and that will attract residents and visitors to stroll, shop, and enjoy cultural activities.

Mount Pleasant Main Street, Inc. is a 501 ©(3) volunteer organization. Membership contributions are 100% tax deductible. Please be as generous as you can. We will be grateful for your contributions, regardless of size.

Organizational News



Photo by Steve Davis

2007 is starting off as another exciting year for Mount Pleasant Main Street (MPMS). We have filled a number of board seats and are operating with a fresh, energetic group of board members and volunteers. We kicked the year off with a Merchant Mixer working with the Business Association where we addressed key topics such as tax increases. We also welcomed spring with a wine tasting at Dos Gringos in April which was a huge success, thanks to the support of Arun at Sportsman's Wine and Liquors and Alex from Dos Gringos. April saw the departure of our ED, Sherrill Berger. We thank her for her passion and contributions to the organization over the past two years and are actively recruiting to fill the ED role. This year we are focusing more on physical enhancements in the neighborhood by working with DDOT for a transportation enhancement study and working with businesses for façade and window display assistance. Our tree box maintenance program is alive and well thanks to Tia Pratt and the nearly \$3000 in donations we received as part of our annual fundraising drive! To continue these programs we need your buy-in, your volunteerism, your membership and your financial support. We hope you'll join us in our quest to make our neighborhood the beautiful, safe, vibrant place we all envision.

Adam Hoey, Vice-President

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 2nd Tues of month volunteer meeting
- 3rd Tues of month board meeting
- Sept 30th FiestaDC

Chronicles of the 42

Step on the 42!
Right or left shoe first;
It is up to you because time will stop soon.
Slow motion now surrounds, and one can hear every sound;
Conversations about the profound mixed with quibbles about parts of town.
Use another sense:
Sight perhaps is best.
Look around outside the bus where you can see the weather thrust;
Rains drops slowly fall stopping at the door
Amazed that you stayed dry?
It's as if someone decided to stop his or her cry.
The clouds in the sky start to clear, and abundant sunshine is here.
Along comes a whimsical summer breeze and a temperature that just begs 'please.'
You entered the 42:
A magical eschew of mystical journeys through time awaits you, where lives intersect and intertwine for merely moments in time.
I assure you that everything is fine.
Think of the people you will meet;
They might be sharing your seat;
Envision the walks they have taken and the paths they are blazing.
You never know too, what wonderful things they do.
But one can only envision the greatness in this vision.
You see families on their way to enjoying the day.
People are speaking in hues.
Their voices fill the aisle with delight as this magical journey takes flight.
The bus is on the move!
Passing moment after moment pursues,
But none of that should matter to you.
Look out your window, please, to see the sun stretch through the trees.
Everything looks beautiful somehow.
The culture of what is around us seeps into the bus to confound us.
You can sense the history and tradition of the neighborhoods through which the bus offers admission.
Look carefully as we drive and see the footsteps gliding by;
They tell stories of many things:
What is, what will be, and what's been.
You notice your stop comes near:
Make the driver aware.
Stop now and it is time to go;
You'll want to inch off toe by toe;
Sadly the fun must end and the world again begins to spin.
The rain picks up too;
And the music turns sad and blue.
You're off the 42.
A solemn goodbye to you;
I will see you again, my friend
the next time we choose to ride;
Because when you're on the 42,
Time always stops for you.

- by Charles Silberman

Board of Directors

Mount Pleasant Main Street Board of Directors

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MPMS Programs

Farmer's Market



Mt. Pleasant Farmers Market at Lamont Park, 17th, Lamont & Mt. Pleasant Streets, NW; Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. till 1:00 p.m. The market opened on May 5, 2007 and runs through November 17. (Contact: Robin Shuster; 202.234.0559).

The Mt. Pleasant farmers market is growing each year, as neighbors continue to frequent the white tents and laden tables each Saturday morning. In 2006, however, the market helped 700 residents purchase fruits and vegetables through the WIC (Women, Infants, Children) Program.

"The thing that we're really, really proud of is we really were able to increase our WIC sales 10-fold," said market organizer Robin Shuster. Mt. Pleasant helped the city increase their redemptions from 48 to 61 percent.

The Mt. Pleasant farmers market started working with WIC and the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program about three years ago, and it has increased each year. "The coupons allow residents, who otherwise would not have probably come to the market, access to locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables," Shuster said. "We brought the ability to improve their nutrition to so many people who may not have known the market was there."

Shuster oversaw the printing of 15,000 color postcards in Spanish for distribution at various clinics, and the residents came in droves. "We increased access to the market among the whole community," she said. "We have tremendous partnerships with the WIC clinics in the area." All fruit and vegetable farmers at the market are trained in the WIC program and are qualified to accept coupons.

The Mt. Pleasant Local Food Market opened in 2003, and now eight producers sell fruit, vegetables, meat and sausages, eggs, jams, breads and flowers. Producers and farmers are from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.'s Bread Line offers its baked goods and bread as well. "Every year, more people come to the market. Foot traffic increases. It's more than twice what it was in 2003," Shuster said. This year, Shuster is working on bringing dairy back to the market.

Mount Pleasant Main Street and the Mt. Pleasant Business Association jointly run a table at the market, to bring information about local businesses to market-goers.

"It's a great opportunity to bring the business community into the market," Shuster said.

Argyle's Convenience Store



Argyle's the neighborhood convenience store that really means convenience! Argyle's has been open since 1985, and is now a neighborhood staple. You can find a plethora of items here, including an ATM machine, and any non-perishables you're seeking: wine, beer, food, office and cleaning supplies, and lottery tickets. Argyle's aims to stock all items that customers request, thus becoming a true neighborhood corner store. In late 2005, was forced to shut down for eight months due to an electrical fire that occurred in the middle of night. Owner Rocky Rakani says, "I was not going to re-open after the fire, but I received so many requests and e-mails from neighbors encouraging me to re-open and lending emotional support that it really inspired me to open again."

Argyle's has recently redone its façade to add new windows modeled in the original historic style. Argyle's Convenience Store is located on the corner of 17th Street and Park Road NW. It is open from 7am to midnight everyday, and is never closed even on holidays.

Mt. Pleasant – A Third Place

With its unique restaurants and shops, Mt. Pleasant is a bastion of “third places,” which are community-building areas outside the typical home and workplace. Haydee’s Restaurant, Marx Café, Don Juan’s Restaurant, Tonic Restaurant or Dos Gringos Café are all examples of the many third places in the neighborhood; they are places for the community to gather, where all are welcome.

In an effort to enhance Mt. Pleasant’s “sense of place” and community, Haydee’s Restaurant held a Merchant Mixer on March 16. Barry Margeson of the Enhanced Business Information Center (e-BIC) and Erik Moses of the D.C. Department of Small & Local Business Development visited with Mt. Pleasant business owners, sharing strategies and resources to remain competitive. According to Margeson, Mt. Pleasant offers many third places. These social spaces are outside the two traditional social places, home and work, and are thus termed ‘third places.’ Third places offer a sense of place where a diversity of people come together, and they bring out the unique characteristics of the neighborhood.

As a ‘place of third places,’ Mt. Pleasant is well poised to take advantage of new developments in Washington, D.C., which will draw shoppers and residents to the area. Mt. Pleasant businesses offer what chain-store retailers and restaurants do not; a comfortable and community-oriented shopping, dining, and entertainment experience.

Erik Moses confirmed that the city focuses on supporting existing local businesses. His department hopes to offer greater tools and resources to assist local, small, disadvantaged businesses access opportunities. To that end, the District is launching a promotional campaign called “Support D.C., Buy Local.”

More than 20 people attended the March Merchant Mixer. Haydee Vanegas and Mario Alas of Haydee’s Restaurant provided the space and a delicious El Salvadorian breakfast. Mt. Pleasant Main Street offers two or more Merchant Mixers per year to share information and resources with businesses. Look forward to the next Merchant Mixer in September 2007.



Haydee Vanegas and Mario Alas of Haydee's Restaurant

MPMS WINS TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT GRANT: STUDY TO BEGIN MAY 2007

Last year, Mt. Pleasant won some money from D.C. government. In June 2006, Mt. Pleasant Main Street, Inc. applied for a portion of a \$2 million city-wide Transportation Enhancement Grant sponsored by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and was awarded approximately \$70,000 for a formal landscape and urban design plan to focus on Lamont Park and parts of Mt. Pleasant Street. The plan, which will include a neighborhood needs analysis, design blueprints and budget, will initiate a three-year phased vision and is necessary to facilitate city implementation and spending. The overall project will incorporate such items as a Lamont Park redesign and repair, pedestrian-friendly paths from the park to shopping areas, bike lanes, improved sidewalks, and gas lamp-style street lights. The plan will also address issues as parking and traffic flow. The study will consolidate input from both neighborhood and business organizations as well as results from studies and design charrettes over the last few years.

In early April 2007, MPMS and RestoreDC, the administrator of the D.C. Main Streets Program, met with DDOT's Office of Transportation Policy and Planning and learned that the \$70,000 study will now be rolled into a larger, more comprehensive Transportation Enhancement study for the entire Mt. Pleasant neighborhood. According to DDOT, the funding will still be used to address more specific enhancements needed in Lamont Park and Mt. Pleasant Street. DDOT has already selected a consultant, and the project is set to commence in early May 2007. It will run six to eight months, with initial physical implementations scheduled for early 2008. A steering committee will be created in May to represent Mt. Pleasant neighborhood organizations. MPMS Design Committee Chair Steve Pinkus and Vice President Adam Hoey will be representing MPMS on this committee to consolidate and facilitate communication with other neighborhood organizations, to guide project scope, and to make design recommendations.

Please feel free to contact MPMS with questions or comments at info@mtpmainstreet.org

Mt. Pleasant Main Street | Brown Street Market



Manager

Jinny Choi has been at the Brown Street Market for three years, but the market's been around just a little longer. “I think everybody knows about us, because we’ve been here for 40 years,” she says. The small convenience store perches at the corner of Brown and Newton Streets NW, offering nearby neighbors the bare essentials to get through the week – milk, eggs, beer, wine and sundries. “We have a little bit, little bit of everything,” she smiles.

Around the narrow aisles and packed up the walls, you can find everything from ice cream to fresh bananas to rock salt – in the winter, of course. Ms. Choi enjoys working in Mt. Pleasant, saying the neighborhood and her customers are good.

The market is open from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. seven days a week, opening a little later on Sundays.

Our Mission

Funded by Mayor Fenty's Restore DC Program, the mission of Mount Pleasant Main Street is to attract more people to shop on Mt. Pleasant Street by supporting the local merchants while enhancing the physical and economic features of the street. Situated in Ward 1 and ANC 1D, Mt. Pleasant is a culturally rich urban village providing residents and visitors with convenient shopping, unique ethnic grocery items, sit down dining and entertainment for young and old alike. Our neighborhood business district in Washington, D.C., hosts numerous small independently owned businesses that cater to a diverse customer base.



Membership Contributions

Become a member of Mount Pleasant Main Street and help improve the lives of its residents and enhance the economic revitalization of its business district. For more information on how to become a member, renew your membership, or make a special contribution online using Pay Pal or Network for Good, we invite you to visit our web site www.mtpmain-street.org. In addition, you may write a check payable to Mount Pleasant Main Street. The mailing address is 3213 Mt. Pleasant Street, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20010.

Business News

Shopping In Mt. Pleasant's Mercados

Pedestrians

on Mt. Pleasant Street pass the soaring spires of stately churches, and the Italianate facades of buildings named Argyle and Deauville that recall an era fixated on Old World culture. But at eye-level, Mt. Pleasant's businesses ebb and throb, in a riot of words and colors and busy neighbors on the street. Spanish radio filters onto the sidewalk, in polyphonies of laughter, tongues, and rhythms that belong to the New World.

On the varied blocks of Mt. Pleasant Street, you will encounter friendly locals from Asia, Africa, and the Spanish-speaking Diaspora, ranging from Central America to the Caribbean. All of these residents have brought the tastes and sounds of their homelands with them, in a smattering of small, unique markets.

While the buildings are older than a sparkling brand-new supermarket in the suburbs, D.C. shoppers will be surprised at the low prices of canned goods, produce, and ethnic spice mixes. Shred nopales and chayote on your salads. Experiment with Quechua stews and ceviches; substitute charrales for canned anchovies; and tantalize your palates with beverages made from mango, cashew, hibiscus, guarana, manzanilla, tamarind, guanaba, soursop, yerba mate and rice.

Mt. Pleasant Super Market, 3124 Mt. Pleasant Street; (202) 332-4795. This is the "go-to" market if you're in the midst of making a meal, and find that you're missing a key ingredient. Mt. Pleasant Super Market offers an in-house butcher; reasonable prices on fresh fish and seafood; a wide selection of bottled fruit nectars, canned goods and fresh cheeses; and a healthy range of household products and kitchen items. Unrefined and Turbinado sugars are in stock at this clean, well-lighted market.

El Progreso, 3158 Mt. Pleasant Street; (202) 462-1151. El Progreso offers a butcher on-premise with boneless chicken breast and homemade chorizos, as well as an incredible selection and mind-boggling bargains on spices and extracts. Pick up 5-litre cans of cold-pressed Spanish olive oil; balsamic vinegar and bottled olives; and Italian pasta. Find a wide variety of dried cereals, grains, legumes and beans. Produce features South American-style squash. Discover herbal teas galore, and turbinado and burnt sugars.

Super Save Market, 3161 Mt. Pleasant Street; (202) 328-1320. Also offering an in-house butcher, Super Save Market presents a lovely selection of spices, herbs, chilies, and salsas. Savor the Jamaican Ginger Beer and Brazilian Guarana! Chef Garcia's blue corn and yellow tortilla chips for a special treat.

Bestway, 3178 Mt. Pleasant Street; (202) 265-3768. One of Mt. Pleasant's largest employers, Bestway is well known for its fair, inexpensive prices and friendly bilingual staff. Bestway flies in seafood from the Caribbean and ethnic foods from Central America. With excellent prices on fruit, much of the produce is half the price shoppers typically pay elsewhere. Bestway also participates in D.C.'s WIC (Women Infants Children) program. The tight aisles are chock full of good-priced meats and cheeses; canned goods; masa harina; nectars and juices; spices and herbs; and rice varieties ranging from jasmine to basmati. Find fresh breads and rolls at low prices. Incorporating community input, Bestway is in the process of completing façade renovations to add a new look and spruce up its corner at Lamont Street.



DC Pedestrian Study

The District of Columbia values pedestrians and wants to make the streets safer. According to George Branyan, DDOT Pedestrian Coordinator, pedestrian fatalities in 2006 were 17. The six-year low occurred in 2002, with only eight pedestrians killed in the District.

Still, just one death is one too many. To increase safety and awareness, D.C. government has started the creation of a Pedestrian Master Plan. "The plan is not going to get too detailed or specific," Branyan said in March. "We're going to look at 100 miles of corridors, stretches of roadways that are demonstrated places where we have problems with pedestrian safety, because of complaints and citizen concerns." Near Mt. Pleasant, 14th Street NW is a high-priority corridor right now, considering the new construction on either side of the street.

The District plans to experiment with crosswalk signals with yellow flashing lights embedded in the pavement. "That really brings the crosswalk to the attention of the driver," Branyan said. They'll also consider curb extensions, which extend the sidewalk into the street so pedestrians have a shorter walk across the street.

The D.C. Pedestrian Master Plan can be accessed at (www.tooledesign.com/projects/dc). Public involvement is needed through October 2007, when the final plan will be completed.

For more information, contact George Branyan, DDOT Pedestrian Coordinator, at (202) 671-2561 or george.branyan@dc.gov